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United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am responding to your letter of February 19 to Secretary Shultz, inquiring about our policy on Afghanistan and aid to the Afghan resistance.

Our objectives on Afghanistan, which we share with Pakistan, are a rapid and complete withdrawal of Soviet forces, the return of the refugees with safety and honor, the restoration of an independent and nonaligned Afghanistan, and self-determination for the Afghan people.

The key to a solution, of course, is Soviet withdrawal. General Secretary Gorbachev has stated that the Soviet Union wants to commence withdrawals as soon as possible. We have welcomed his statements and have insisted that the Soviet withdrawal be prompt, complete and irreversible, with a significant portion of the troops leaving early in the process.

In December 1985, the United States agreed in principle to play the role of a guarantor of a settlement arrived at through indirect talks at Geneva between Pakistan and Afghanistan under the mediation of the United Nations, provided that we were fully satisfied that the completed settlement would achieve our objectives. This decision, which was fully coordinated within the Executive Branch, was conveyed by Ambassador Walters to UN Secretary General Perez de Cuellar. It is important to note that the U.S. is not a party to the Geneva negotiations. The Government of Pakistan and the Afghan authorities are the parties in these proximity talks. The negotiations have lasted for over five years.

As guarantors, the U.S. and the Soviet Union would agree not to intervene or interfere in Afghanistan; we would not guarantee the activity of other nations. We would undertake to respect the commitments made by the Pakistanis and Afghans to one another. Under the Geneva framework, "outside interference" would end at the same time that Soviet troop

The Honorable
Lee Hamilton,
Chairman,
Subcommittee on Europe and
the Middle East,
House of Representatives.

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withdrawals began. We have insisted that an end to outside interference must include Soviet assistance to the Kabul regime. Secretary Shultz pressed this point during his recent discussions in Moscow. We will maintain our assistance to the Afghan resistance until we are satisfied that our goal of an irreversible withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan is assured.

The restoration of Afghanistan's independence is a top foreign policy priority of this Administration, and has been since 1981. This objective now appears within reach. It is consequently important to pay close attention to the details emerging in Geneva.

Sincerely,

J. Edward Fox
Assistant Secretary
Legislative Affairs

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